You are receiving this email because the government response to the Consultation on Cleaner Domestic Burning of Solid Fuels and Wood has been published and can be viewed at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/air-quality-using-cleaner-fuels-for-domestic-burning](https://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=17268&d=8ZfP3uP1ATgFqNloj0BJ49Ky5EKQB8rRR0LCWsMcRw&s=658&u=https%3a%2f%2fwww%2egov%2euk%2fgovernment%2fconsultations%2fair-quality-using-cleaner-fuels-for-domestic-burning)

**Background:**

In January 2019 Defra published its Clean Air Strategy.  This set out the actions which Government will take to reduce emissions from a range of sources, including domestic burning.

Evidence shows that the burning of wood and coal in the home is the largest single contributor to particulate matter pollution - identified by the World Health Organization as the most damaging air pollutant.

Following the publication of the Clean Air Strategy, Defra consulted on proposals to introduce legislation for cleaner domestic burning of solid fuels in Autumn 2018.  The proposals included:

* Restrictions on the sale of wet wood for domestic burning, so that it can only be purchased in volumes over a specified cut-off point
* Applying a 2% sulphur limit and smoke emission limit of 5g per hour to all manufactured solid fuels
* Phasing out the sale of bituminous (traditional house) coal

Government recognises that a range of households have open fires or stoves and is not seeking to prevent their use or installation through these proposals.  However, action is needed to reduce the amount of PM2.5 produced as a direct result of domestic combustion

To encourage change, our objective is to raise awareness of the potential health impacts of air pollution from domestic burning, ensure consumers are provided with reliable information to make informed choices, and legislate to restrict sales of the most polluting fuels.

**Summary:**

We have taken account of all the responses received to the consultation.  The publication of the Government Response announces Defra’s intention to introduce legislation for the following fuels:

i) Wood

Require all wood sold for domestic combustion in volumes under 2m3 to have a moisture content of 20% or less. This will come into effect one year from publication  of the Government Response with small foresters being given an extra year to become compliant.

Suppliers of wood in volumes in excess of 2m3 will be required to provide customers with instructions for seasoning wet wood, and these will be accompanied by a warning advising that wood is not suitable to be burnt without appropriate drying.

Retailers will be required to store seasoned wood in such a way as to keep it dry and not exceed the 20% moisture level.

ii) Manufactured Solid fuels

The existing smoke control area sulphur and smoke emission standards for manufactured solid fuels will be extended to cover the whole of England.  This will come into effect one year from publication of the Government Response.

iii) Coal

Sales of all pre-packaged bituminous house coal (i.e. that sold through retailers, supermarkets and DIY stores) will be banned one year from publication of the Government Response. This ban will not apply to loose sales of coal direct to customers via approved coal merchants for a further two years.

We understand that those who burn coal as a primary heat source, and are more likely to be in fuel poverty, are most likely to have their coal delivered by registered coal merchants.  We plan to work with coal merchants through the Approved Coal Merchants Scheme to ensure they advise and educate their direct delivery customers with a view to switching them from coal to MSFs during the two year transition period during which they will still be able to deliver coal directly to customers.

Evidence shows that manufactured solid fuels are more efficient on an energy efficiency basis than coal, making them cheaper to burn. The phased transition period will allow coal users to switch to an alternative fuel that meets their needs.

We will be running a communications campaign to help consumers understand what they can do to reduce the impact on their health and the environment when using solid fuels to heat their homes. We will also create detailed guidance on what the new legislation means for consumers, retailers and suppliers.

Kind regards

**Bridget Allison**

Senior Policy Advisor | Air Quality & Domestic Burning | Air Quality & Industrial Emissions| Environmental Quality Directorate | **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**